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International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Human Rights Committee
113th session

Summary record (partial)* of the 3135th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 16 March 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Walker (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)
later: Mr. Salvioli

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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Mr. Walker (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – OHCHR) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the 113th session of the Committee. Speaking on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, he expressed concern that terrorist attacks on the media, such as the one that had taken place in Paris on 7 January 2015, could have an alarming effect on freedom of expression. The major obstacles to such freedom, however, were the restrictions placed on it by governments, an issue that had been raised by the Committee at its last session. The freedom to speak, on the other hand, should not be unrestricted and it was vital that opinion-makers refrained from incitement to hostility or violence.

2. It was regrettable that the death penalty was once again in use in States that had previously adopted a moratorium on the practice. There was ample evidence that capital punishment had no impact whatsoever in reducing crime and that no justice system, no matter how robust, could guarantee against wrongful convictions. On a positive note: the death penalty had recently been abolished in Chad, Madagascar and Suriname; a moratorium had been introduced in Pennsylvania, reflecting a decline in the use of capital punishment in the United States of America; and a record number of countries had supported General Assembly resolution 69/186 calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

3. A welcome development since the last session had been the launch of a long-awaited online public database of treaty body case law. It was hoped that the database would prove useful to Committee members, who were encouraged to offer comments and suggestions for possible improvements.

4. A less welcome development had been the budget cuts imposed on OHCHR, which might put a strain on its capacity to support some areas of the Committee's work. Nevertheless, in 2015, its focus would be on helping the Committee reach the targets set out in General Assembly resolution 68/268. In that regard, he encouraged the Committee to: continue finding ways to harmonize working methods, for example in relation to the role of the Rapporteur on reprisals; consider how it would approach the General Assembly with regard to the implementation of the Addis Ababa guidelines; and identify any exceptional language needs for future sessions so that they could be communicated to the Conference Services Division, which was endeavouring to meet the needs of the 10 treaty bodies. In view of the limited resources available to the Division, he urged the Committee to exercise moderation when requesting an exceptional language.

Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee in accordance with article 38 of the Covenant

5. **The Chairperson** welcomed six new members to the Committee: Ms. Cleveland, Mr. de Frouville, Ms. Jelic, Mr. Laki, Ms. Pazartzis and Mr. Politi. He invited them to make the solemn declaration required under article 16 of the rules of procedure.

6. **Ms. Cleveland, Mr. de Frouville, Ms. Jelic, Mr. Laki, Ms. Pazartzis** and **Mr. Politi** made the following declaration: "I solemnly undertake to discharge my duties as a member of the Human Rights Committee impartially and conscientiously."

Election of the Chairperson and other officers of the Committee

7. **Mr. Rodríguez-Rescia** nominated Mr. Salvioli for the office of Chairperson.

8. **Ms. Waterval, Mr. Iwasawa, Mr. Ben Achour** and **Mr. Bouzid** seconded the nomination.

9. *Mr. Salvioli was elected Chairperson by acclamation.*

Mr. Salvioli took the Chair.

10. **The Chairperson** thanked the Committee members for the trust that they had placed in him. It would be an honour to assist the Committee as it worked to further the implementation of the Covenant and respond to the needs of victims of human rights violations.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

11. **Mr. Rodríguez-Rescia** nominated Mr. Iwasawa, Mr. Seetulsingh and Ms. Seibert-Fohr for the offices of Vice-Chairperson and Mr. Vardzelashvili for the office of Rapporteur of the Committee.

12. *Mr. Iwasawa, Mr. Seetulsingh and Ms. Seibert-Fohr were elected Vice-Chairpersons by acclamation.*

13. *Mr. Vardzelashvili was elected Rapporteur of the Committee.*

Adoption of the agenda (CCPR/C/113/1)

14. *The agenda was adopted.*

Organizational and other matters, including the adoption of the report of the pre-sessional Working Group on Individual Communications

15. **Sir Nigel Rodley** (Rapporteur of the Working Group on Individual Communications) said that the Working Group, which had met from 9 to 13 March 2015, was composed of eight members: Mr. Ben Achour, Mr. Bouzid, Mr. Salvioli, Mr. Seetulsingh, Ms. Seibert-Fohr, Mr. Vardzelashvili, Ms. Waterval and himself. The Group had considered 27 cases. It had adopted 14 recommendations finding a violation of the Covenant and one recommendation finding no violation. It recommended that the plenary should adopt 10 decisions of inadmissibility, including in relation to two Special Rapporteur drafts, and consider one communication on the merits. It had decided that the other case should be re-examined at the next session pending additional information.

16. *The report of the Working Group on Individual Communications was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.50 a.m.